

How to Keep a Food Journal

Your food journal will help recognize why you eat the foods you do. And, it will provide a means to analyze the nutrient content of your diet.

Here's how. In a small notebook, on index cards or anything that is easy to carry with you, write down everything you eat, *as you eat it*. (Don't rely on memory.) Or, make several copies of our journal sheet, which follows. Keep the journal for three days, preferably two weekdays and one weekend day.

Record each day:

The day of the week

The food

The amount or size (be specific) of the food*

The time and place you ate it

How you felt physically

Personal observations

At the end of the day, also jot down how much exercise you did. Then review your diary and write down your reactions to it. For example, was this a typical day? Worse than normal? Did you feel that you ate less because you were recording what you ate? What circumstances contributed to how much or little or the kinds of food you ate?

For example:

FOOD	AMOUNT	TIME/PLACE	SENSORY	EMOTIONAL
Frosted Flakes	2 fists	6:45am; kitchen counter	Not very hungry; tired	Rushed; overslept
M&Ms	Fistful	10:15am; officemate's cubicle	Starving	Didn't really *need* to eat them; must be PMS

* You don't have to measure. You can use relative sizes such as "2 palm-sized slices" or a scoop "the size of a fist".

